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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: GENERAL MISHLEV SEES NO QUICK SOLUTION TO STALLED
RED CRESCENT AMBULANCES

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: POL/C and ECON/C met with Major General Yossef Mishlev, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), at the Ministry of Defense April 19. POL/C conveyed the Ambassador's concerns on access and movement issues, specifically approval of five Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) ambulances to operate in East Jerusalem and medical convoys. Mishlev said that the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Magen David Adom (MDA) and GOI held a "good" meeting on April 17 to discuss the ambulances, but did not report any new proposals to resolve the underlying sovereignty issues at stake. Mishlev gave no indication that the political solution needed to reach agreement on the PRCS ambulance, licensing and staff certification questions holding up approval of the ambulance could be expected anytime soon. POL/C also presented a list of American citizens that are among residents of El-Bireh whose lands have been confiscated by the GOI for security reasons, and ECON/C raised the issue of extending Palestinian fishing rights in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coast of Gaza. END SUMMARY

22. (C) Mishlev listed a number of PRCS access issues that he said the GOI had addressed:

- special lanes for movement of ambulances at crossings;
- posting of two ambulances at a private East Jerusalem hospital, operating under the name of the hospital;
- positioning of an ambulance at the Allenby bridge crossing that can be moved in and out of Area A (Jericho);
- patient evacuations from the West Bank to East Jerusalem at a cost of NIS 250,000 to be borne by the Israeli Ministry of Health; and
- general cooperation between the GOI and PRCS.

33. (C) Mishlev said the issue of stationing Palestinian paramedics at the Allenby bridge crossing has been discussed several times and that he had asked MDA to check into the issue, but that this had not been implemented so far. Mishlev offered that he thought facilitating movement of ambulances (through checkpoints) and staff (within the West Bank) was important, but that the process was not "smooth" and that "somebody" had put limits on their movement. Mishlev said the fundamental question was whether a case was really an emergency and fell under the Agreement on Operational Arrangements (AOA) to an MOU signed in November 2005 by the PRCS and Magen David Adom.

14. (C) POL/C informed Mishlev that during a recent meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Defense Minister Sneh made a commitment to initiate medical convoys from Gaza to the West Bank in the near future. Mishlev thought the project was in the final process of implementation, and promised to look into it.

15. (C) Mishlev cited political considerations rather than security concerns as the roadblock to making headway on stationing PRCS ambulances in East Jerusalem. Calling the question of a PRCS emblem on ambulances to be stationed in East Jerusalem "really very sensitive," Mishlev said the issue was not his to resolve and that he had asked FM Livni and the MDA to find a solution. POL/C said the U.S. had invested considerable effort in promoting the MDA's admission into the ICRC. We are therefore concerned that political fallout from the ambulance issue could cause an Arab effort to expel MDA at the International Federation of the Red Cross conference in November 2007.

16. (C) ECON/C reviewed the issue of extending the limit on Gaza fishermen from 6 miles to 8 to 12 miles to allow them access to an increased fishing catch. Mishlev said he had discussed this issue with the IDF but had not gotten them to approve extending the zone. ECON/C said that, working with USAID, we would like to present a paper on suggested methods of increasing the zone while being attentive to IDF security concerns. Mishlev said he would welcome the paper and use it to re-engage IDF on the issue. POL/C also raised the issue of the confiscation of land owned by American citizens in the West Bank village of El Bireh, and presented Mishlev with a list of eight Amcits whose land was being confiscated. (Note: The list of Amcits was developed by Con Gen Jerusalem. The eight signed a privacy waiver.) POL/C added that there were more Amcits affected by the confiscation

order but we did not yet have authorization to provide their names. Mishlev said he would raise the issue with the Civil Administration.

17. (C) COMMENT: The PRCS ambulance issue appears to be largely a struggle between two sovereignty claims. The GOI considers all of Jerusalem to be part of Israel, and therefore regards Red Crescent symbols and Palestinian license plates on ambulances operating in East Jerusalem to be challenges to that claim. On the other hand, the PRCS likely considers the Israeli proposal to have the private East Jerusalem hospital officially own the ambulances -- with the hospital's name on the Israel-licensed ambulances and an Israeli or Israeli-certified team operating it for them -- to be an unacceptable Israeli interference. The security issues are negligible, the bureaucratic issues are surmountable. But the sovereignty barriers will not be removed unless someone is willing to make what they would consider a major political compromise, something neither side seems capable of doing at the current level of the discussions.

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JONES